REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 16-18 are pending in the application.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. Claims 1-7, 10, 16 and 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al. (US 20030133256; "Yoshida") in view of Yoshimura (US 4,864,472), and further in view of Kamigawa et al. (US 6,139,592; "Kamigawa").

B. Claims 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida in view of Yoshimura, and further in view of Kamigawa and Fawcett et al. (US 4,192,721; "Fawcett").

The above rejections should be withdrawn because there is insufficient motivation to combine Kamigawa with Yoshida and Yoshimura. Further, one of the ordinary skill could not have arrived at the present invention, even by combining the teachings of Kamigawa with those of Yoshida and Yoshimura.

Unlike Yoshida and Yoshimura, which relate to a step of forming a semiconductor layer (conductive polymer layer), Kamigawa only discloses an apparatus for aging a capacitor element provided with a completed structure. Although all three references are similar to the extent that they relate to forming a solid electrolytic capacitor, Kamigawa is completely different from Yoshida and Yoshimura in the timing of supplying a constant current. In each step of producing a capacitor element, the required circuits and conditions are completely different. Accordingly, one of the ordinary skill understands that the circuits and conditions for a certain step cannot simply be transferred to another completely different step. Hence, there is no apparent motivation which would lead one of the ordinary skill to employ a constant current diode of

Kamigawa in the step for forming a semiconductor layer in Yoshida and Yoshimura, and the rejection relies on hindsight to find motivation for the asserted combination.

Kamigawa was cited as teaching a mechanism of limiting current in excess of a predetermined value. However, the technology of limiting current disclosed by Kamigawa is merely a current limiter and not a circuit for supplying a constant current to an element. The configuration of Kamigawa is arranged so that a constant current diode works to limit current in excess of a predetermined value. The constant current diode is not working unless current in excess of a predetermined value is supplied to the element, i.e., creating a short-circuit. At column 8, lines 8 to 24, Kamigawa teaches that the apparatus is capable of applying the rated voltage to the capacitor elements by limiting the current to be passed through the shorted element, and therefore, the number of shorted capacitor elements can be calculated by measuring the output current value of the power source, which is the sum of the value of current through the capacitor free of short-circuiting and the limit value of current through the current limiter connected to the shorted capacitor element. Thus, it is apparent that the diodes connected to the elements free of short-circuiting do not control current in Kamigawa. If all the elements are free of short-circuiting, all the constant current diodes do not, or rather, cannot work to control current for aging in Kamigawa.

On the contrary, in the present application, the constant current diode works to supply a constant current to the element. So the operation of the constant current diodes is completely opposite from that of Kamigawa.

Furthermore, as is clear from the description at column 7, lines 65-67 of Kamigawa, the current through the capacitor element is normally several microamperes or at least several

milliamperes in the event of short-circuiting. That is, the current to be passed through each of the elements in Kamigawa is not a constant current.

As discussed above, Kamigawa completely differs from the present invention in intended purpose and structure customized for that purpose. Therefore, the structure of the present invention cannot be achieved even by modifying the invention of Yoshida or Yoshimura to employ the technology of Kamigawa to restrict current flow as is. Moreover, Fawcett (cited as disclosing a connection terminal for the electric conductor made of a metal sheet or foil-like metal material) also does not provide any motivation for combining Kamigawa with Yoshida (and Yoshimura).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejections of claims 1-10 and 16-18.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Yan Lan / by Atty R
Reg. No. 33,276

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
23373
CUSTOMER NUMBER

Yan Lan
Registration No. 50,214

Date: October 30, 2009